

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 701

By Crutchfield

A RESOLUTION to recognize the Reverend Herbert H. Wright on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body are pleased to specially recognize those dynamic pastors who have not only answered God's call by serving as the spiritual leader of their congregations, but who also leave the safety of their church buildings to go out into society to confront its institutional and societal problems and evils; and

WHEREAS, one such committed servant of the Lord is the Reverend Herbert H. Wright, who recently retired after 44 years as pastor of the Wesley Chapel Christian Community Church in Chattanooga; he has not only faithfully ministered to his flock, but has actively confronted poverty and injustice in the world at large; and

WHEREAS, born August 2, 1930 in Tupelo, Mississippi, the Reverend Wright graduated from Pontoc County High School before accepting the Lord's call to the ministry at the age of 19; he furthered his education by attending Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee and then became affiliated with the CME Church, at which time he went out to pastor churches in Kentucky and Florida; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Wright came to Chattanooga to serve as pastor of Phillips Temple CME Church and, upon leaving Phillips Temple, he organized the Christian Community Church which later merged with the congregation of Wesley Chapel Church, becoming Wesley Chapel Christian Community Church; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Wright's pastorate at Wesley Chapel Christian Community Church prospered for 44 years until his retirement on July 27, 2003; and

WHEREAS, during his ministry at Wesley Chapel Christian Community Church, the Reverend Wright, along with his friend Dr. C.T. Vivian, was awarded a Fellowship in Continuing Education from the Ford Foundation; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Wright used the opportunity afforded him through the Fellowship to better understand poverty and social injustice, taking a life-changing six-month sabbatical to live as a pauper among the poor and destitute on the streets of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, this time spent in Chicago proved to be an enlightening experience and the Reverend Wright's life and entire way of thinking was transformed; he became more aware of the need for radical action to advance the Lord's purposes for His creation, and he never shrank from fighting against injustices suffered by African-Americans and the poor of every race and color; and

WHEREAS, though his beliefs and actions prompted people of ill will to burn his house and bomb his van, the Reverend Wright was never deterred from pursuing what he believed was right; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Wright has often been a solitary demonstrator marching against instances of injustice, he has always been persistent in seeking to secure just results for those who have suffered; knowing that his Creator was always at hand, public approval and personal recognition were not his concern as he diligently sought God's justice; and

WHEREAS, the ministry of the Reverend Wright has not been limited to preaching and teaching the Gospel and fighting social injustices; he has reached out to those around him in whatever way has been necessary to gain their attention; he is equally at home digging a ditch or visiting the sick, engaging in a church or civic meeting, or welcoming those wanting a moment of his time to hear their problems, whether on the street, in his office, or at his home; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Herbert Wright and his wife, the lovely Lucille Moreland Wright, are the proud parents of sons, Cecil, Samuel, and Marcus, and their home is known for its hospitality; the Reverend Wright is also the father of five other children from a previous marriage; and

WHEREAS, playing an active role in his community and city, the Reverend Wright is the founder of the Action Coordinating Council, an organization addressing the needs of the poor and those who have been treated unfairly; he was one of the citizens who spearheaded the reform in the old form of government in the City of Chattanooga in which the City Commission

was replaced by a City Council; he served on the Advisory Committee for the development of the 28th Legislative District Community Development Corporation and became one of the five incorporating members; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly pause in its deliberations to recognize and specially honor this dedicated minister of the Gospel, who possesses an enduring faith in God, a big heart, and an unquenchable passion for justice for all of God's children; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to the Reverend Herbert H. Wright our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, and commend his devotion to improving society, and wish him every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy